MARY TODD LINCOLN'S HANDWRITING

DRAWER 2

MRS. LINCOLN - FIRST LADY

71.2009.085.04427

Mary Todd Lincoln

Handwriting

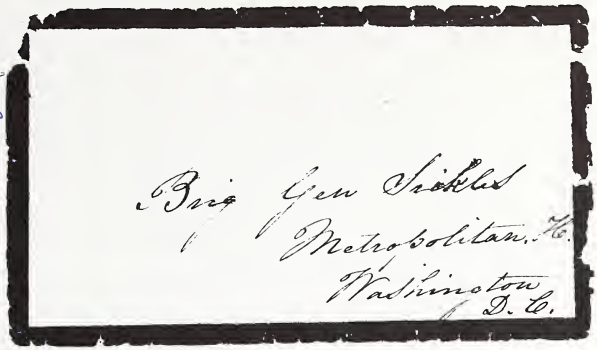
Excerpts from newspapers and other sources

From the files of the

Lincoln Financial Foundation Collection

71.2009 085.64427

July 1965
The quarterly Journal
of the Library of Congress



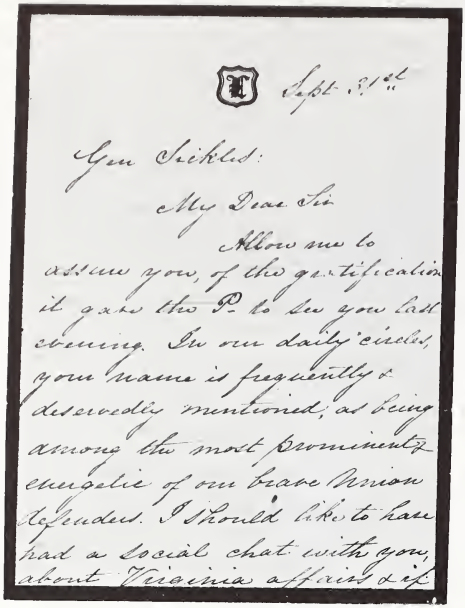
Rare Books

FREDERICK R. GOFF
Chief, Rare Book Division

WHEN A DIVISION—especially one devoted to rare books—receives such a wealth of acquisitions in one year that it can divide its report into two parts, it has indeed come upon good days. A descriptive essay on the books in Lessing J. Rosenwald's most recent gift to the Library of Congress appears earlier in this issue. This portion of the report will be devoted to additions to the other collections in the Rare Book Division.

Alfred Whital Stern Collection of Lincolniana

Among a number of noteworthy additions to the Stern Collection is a letter of primary importance. This is an autograph letter written by Mary Todd Lincoln on "Sept. 31st," 1862, and addressed to Daniel Edgar Sickles, then brigadier general in the Union Army. Another of her letters, written after the President's death, is also in the collection. The new addition consists of three pages with a postscript on the fourth and is an invitation to the general to pay a call at the summer White House. It is neatly—not beautifully—penned. More important, it is not at all perfunctory but convincingly friendly and extremely well-expressed. Her best sentences allude to the threat to the Capital posed by Confederate forces nearby. "When we are within hearing, as we on this elevation, have been, for the last two or three days, of the roaring cannon, we can but pause & think. Yet, as to Washington, yielding to the Rebels, a just Heaven, would prevent that!" After extending her invita-



Sept. 8th

Gen Sickles.

My Dear Sir

Allow me to assure you, of the gratification it gave the P. to see you last evening. In our daily circles, your name is frequently & deservedly mentioned, as being among the most prominent & energetic of our brave Union defenders. I should like to have had a social chat with you, about Virginia affairs & if you remain a day or two in the city, how I do hate the pleasure of seeing you again. We always have so many evening callers, that our conversations, necessarily are general. When we are within hearing, as we are this elevation, have been, for the last two or three days, of the roaring cannon, we can but pause & think. Yet, as to Washington, yielding to the Rebels, a just Heaven, would prevent that.

If you are in W. on Monday next, if you have business & course, are so disposed, can you not drive out about 11 o'clock, in the morning, Mr L. has so much to excite his mind, with fears for the Army, that I am quite considerate in expressing my doubts & fears to him, concerning passing events. If more convenient to you, I could see you, tomorrow morning, at same hour, designated, yet would prefer Monday.

Your friend. Mrs L.

tion she adds, "Mr. L. has so much to excite his mind, with fears for the Army, that I am quite considerate in expressing my doubts & fears to him, concerning passing events."

The small monogramed letter and its envelope, inscribed by Mrs. Lincoln, are both in mourning borders in respect to the death of the Lincolns' 12-year-old son, Willie, in February of 1862. One can hardly fail, thinking of Mrs. Lincoln's tribulations at this period, to be favorably impressed by the admirable qualities that she displays in this fine letter.

An interesting political relic is the large cloth banner, measuring 34 by 46 inches, of the South New Market (N.H.) Lincoln and Johnson Club. Obviously this was in use at the time of the 1864 campaign. The name of Johnson has been inserted in such a way as to suggest that the banner had

Mary Todd Lincoln's letter to General Sickles. Envelope is shown on preceding page. (Alfred Whital Stern Collection of Lincolniana)

also been used in the 1860 campaign when Lincoln's running mate was Hannibal Hamlin. This is further corroborated by the use of a portrait of a beardless Lincoln. Another item documenting this earlier campaign is the text of the letter from the Republican Executive Congressional Committee soliciting the help of campaign workers and making available printed copies of speeches of the candidates. Accompanying this letter, reproduced through lithography (?) and signed by Preston King and the committee, is a broadside listing the speeches which could be purchased at 50 cents per hundred for those of 8 pages and $1 per hundred for those occupying 16 pages. Only three of the pamphlets related directly to Lincoln. The 8-page pamphlets included his speech, "The Demands of the South—The Republican Party Vindicated," available also in a German translation, and E. B. Washburne's "Abraham Lincoln, His Personal History and Public Record."

Two different printings of Lincoln's second inaugural address delivered on March 4, 1865, are among the year's accessions. One, attractively reproduced in blue ink, is without imprint but appears to be contemporaneous; the other, a decorative printing in red and black within ornamental borders, bears the Philadelphia imprint of Bryson & Son. An even rarer broadside is the "Proclamation By the Mayor of the City of Liberty," dated April 17, 1865. This ordered all business houses closed on that day and draped in mourning.

The earliest piece of Lincolniana is an extra of the *State Register,* Monday, August 22, 1842. Textually this relates to the State Bank of Illinois and the refusal of Governor Carlin and the State auditor, James Shields, to honor bills issued by this bank in payment of revenues due to the State. Lincoln must have seen a copy of this extra for it provoked the "Rebecca Letter", which he composed and which was published in the *Sangamo Journal* on September 2, 1842 (see *The Collected Works of Abraham Lincoln,* 1953, vol. 1, p. 291). Mr. Shields took such violent exception to the ridicule he received from Lincoln's pen that the incident almost led to a duel.

A number of later issues pertinent to Lincoln and his assassination have also been added to the Stern Collection's growing newspaper files. Among those are *The Kenosha Telegraph and Tribune,* Kenosha, Wis., May 24, 1860, detailing the presidential nomination of Lincoln by the National Republican Convention; the *Utica Evening Telegraph,* December 10, 1864, which contains an account by an English journalist, Mr. Sala, of his interview with Mr. and Mrs. Lincoln at the White House;[1] the *Utica Morning Herald and Daily Gazette,* May 22, 1865; *The Weekly Herald,* New York, April 22, 1865; and 11 issues of the *Philadelphia Public Ledger,* April 15–27, 1865.

Pennell Cookbook Collection

Last February the Prints and Photographs Division transferred to the Rare Book Division the gastronomic library of 294 titles assembled by the late Mrs. Elizabeth Robins Pennell and presented to the Library a generation ago. Now cataloged through temporary typewritten cards, this collection for the first time may be consulted under proper conditions of service. Mrs. Pennell is well known for her splendidly printed bibliography, *My Cookery Books* (1903), which describes a number of rarities that she had secured for her collection. Unhappily many of these were lost at sea, but a number of important early editions are still available. The earliest is the 1503 Venetian edition of Bartholomaeus Platina's *De honesta voluptate,* regarded in its first edition of 1475 as the first cookery book to be printed. The Li-

brary of Congress, incidentally, possesses five 15th-century editions, including one in Italian, and what is the most likely the first, the dated Venetian edition of 1475.

Mrs. Pennell's collection also contained a number of interesting English editions of the 17th century, notably Sir Hugh Plat's *Delightes for Ladies* (London, 1632), with, unhappily, a damaged titlepage; Hannah Wolley's *A Supplement to the Queen-Like Closet* (London, 1674), otherwise known only through a copy in London; the fourth edition of *The Accomplisht Cook*, approved by Robert Gay (London, 1678); Giles Rose's *A Perfect School of Instruction for the Officers of the Mouth* (London, 1682); *A Queen's Delight or the Art of Preserving, Conserving and Candying* (London, 1683); and what is most interesting of all, an inscribed copy of John Evelyn's famous *Acetaria; a Discourse of Sallets* (London, 1699). This copy was presented to Sir Christopher Wren and is signed by the familiar intertwined initials of J. E. At the end there are some manuscript annotations by the author. Formerly, this copy was owned by a well-known American collector, Herschel V. Jones; there is a manuscript note that it was acquired at the famous Heber sale more than a century ago.

Other Acquisitions

Six years ago—in the *Quarterly Journal of Current Acquisitions* for May 1959—this annual report on rare book acquisitions mentioned the addition of the 1604 Naples edition of Domenico Fontana's *Della transportatione dell' obelisco Vaticano.* Last year the Library was fortunate to secure a splendid copy in its original binding of the first edition, dated 1590, of this account of one of the great engineering achievements of the century—the lowering, transporting, and re-erection of the obelisk in St. Peter's Square in Rome. The plates which depict this operation are finely engraved by Natali Bonifazio after Fontana's original designs; they also contribute important examples in the development of architectural drawing.

For several years the Library endeavored to secure a copy of *As We Remember Joe,* a collection of tributes to Lt. Joseph P. Kennedy, Jr., edited by his brother the late President Kennedy and privately printed at the University Press, Cambridge, Mass., in 1945. The Library's quest ended happily through the kind offices of Mrs. Olga Mikhalevsky, the Secretary to the Librarian of Congress. While visiting her son, Comdr. Nickolas Mikhalevsky of the U.S. Navy, then commanding officer of the U.S.S. *Joseph P. Kennedy, Jr.,* she mentioned the Library's interest in the slight volume for which her son's ship had been named. Comdr. Mikhalevsky recalled the presence of a copy in the ship's library, and after securing official permission, he arranged to have this very copy presented to the Library of Congress. The volume which is now located in the Rare Book Division carries this typed message of transmittal on its flyleaf:

> For eighteen years this book, a gift of its editor, sailed the seas on board the United States Ship Joseph P. Kennedy, Jr. (DD 850), in the service of its country. When it became known that this book was not obtainable elsewhere, it was donated to the Library of Congress by the officers and men of the ship so that all Americans may have access to it and learn more about the American patriot for whom the ship was named.

Some further facts concerning this book have recently been elicited from its publisher by Arthur Price of New York City. There was only one printing of the book and one binding during May of 1945. The first mailing went to 202 individuals,

Handwriting clue to Mrs. Lincoln

By JUDY TOPINKA

What was Mary Todd Lincoln really like?

An encouraging, supportive wife to the President of the United States, or a nagging, shrewish woman who never gave the man a moment's peace in his private life.

Master Graphoanalyst Rudolph Bilotta of Berwyn, reviewing some of her writings from the collection of Lincoln memorabilia at Lincoln Federal Savings and Loan Association, comes up with a little bit of both.

MARY TODD, the dark-eyed, lively Kentucky girl whom Lincoln married in 1842 after his boyhood sweetheart, Ann Rutledge, had died, was a high-strung person, history books tell us. Lincoln was a successful lawyer, and never knew the poverty in middle and later life often ascribed to him. As a result, Mrs. Lincoln had a servant to help her with her home and children, and did get around town a good deal of the time.

Although their home life was not always smooth, it was neither the constant discord that some writers have described. She looked forward to a brilliant social life in the White House, but her hopes were dashed because of the War between the states. She was always noted for her social ambitions and aspirations, and did not appreciate them being.

She was the target of frequent Washington gossips, and was even unjustly suspected of disloyalty to the Union because she was from the South, and because several close relatives were in the Confederate Army. Her bossy ways made her not the most sought after person, socially, and gossips were wont to make much of the Lincoln family's disagreements.

The death of her third son, William Wallace, in 1862, caused her deep grief, and when her husband was assassinated, the shock left Mrs. Lincoln a mental and physical wreck.

Years of travel failed to restore her health, which was further weakened by the death of another son in 1871. Her mental depression continued until she was committed to a private sanitarium for her own good. She was relased after a year, but in 1882 died at the home of a sister in Springfield. She is buried in Lincoln's Tomb in Springfield, with her husband.

"THE HANDWRITING of Abraham Lincoln's wife, Mary, displays an individualistic style that departs often from standardized, school copybook forms, a pattern common to intellectual and creative person," Bilotta recounts. "Her quick writing style and sharp, pointed letters denotes an extremely quick perceptive, original mind, capable of making speedy decisions and forming quick conclusions and almost instant comprehension."

The methodical, moody Lincoln must have found her decisive, speedy ways a torment at times, an inspiration at others.

Her frequent use of the simplified, Greek "d", Bilotta notes, showed the formal educational level she had reached. He also found her to have a warm, spontaneous and enthusiastic personality, which history books were often wont to overlook.

"A rightward, leaning slant, firm pressure and larger than average size script, are graphic signs that highlight a highly responsive, sociable nature that feels and retains emotional experiences over a long lasting period of time. Subconsciously Mrs. Loncoln wanted and needed companionship and communication with others. She seldom had extended periods of quiet and contemplation because of an active, restless nature."

CONTRASTING HER writing to that of her husband's, Bilotta noted Lincoln's smaller writing style with bowed "t" crossings with ends turned down from the center which disclose reserve, intense powers of concentration and strong, self-disciplined control of emotions and actions that restrained impulsive emotions and desires.

"Gifted with quick, intuitive insight (disconnected strokes within words), the President's wife was able to jump to conclusions without methodical, factual thinking," the graphanalyst said. "A highly useful trait, but one that was somewhat offset by her implusive, excitable temperament," he went on. "It may have counterbalanced its accuracy."

Observing the many, narrow, lower-looped letters and frequent underlinings used for emphasis, Bilotta noted that Mary Todd was "Quite choosy about her intimate circle of friends. She preferred handpicked associates who matched interests and social standards equivalent to her own. Similarly, heavy underscorings showed she tended to rely mostly upon herself rather than others to sustain her through many adversities."

She loved that which was aesthetically appealing, and had a literary flair as well. She was an innately good judge of culture and the arts, and enjoyed reading good literature as well as satisfying her creative urge through composition and letter writing.

"A truly remarkable woman whose qualities were destined to obscurity by the tragic circumstances of her life," Bilotta said.

Bilotta, a teacher in the Stickney schools who is a frequent area lecturer on the subject of graphoanalysis, has analyzed many historical figures to the delight of friends and associates.

Mary Todd Lincoln

Suburban Life
February 14, 1976
LaGrange, Ind.

Autographs
-Letters
-Documents
-Manuscripts

KB

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Catalog 75

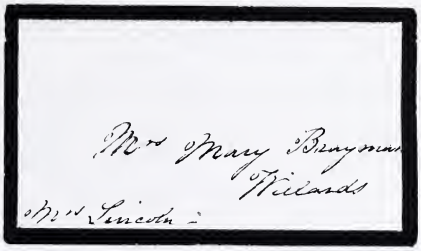
January, 1990

WILLIAM MC KINLEY HOLOGRAPH LETTER CONSOLING THE SISTER
OF A SICK FRIEND WRITTEN THE YEAR HE WAS ELECTED PRESIDENT

20. MC KINLEY, WILLIAM. Autograph Letter Signed, 2 pages 8vo, Canton, ohio, April 21, 1896, to Anna Brown. He writes that he is very sorry to hear that her brother has not yet recovered, but he hopes the cooler weather will benefit him. "You must be brave and keep cheerful for the manifestations of your confidence in his early recovery will, I am sure, have a very beneficial effect upon Colonel Brown." Fine. 700.00

RARE AUTOGRAPH LETTER SIGNED BY O. HENRY

21. O. HENRY (WILLIAM SYDNEY PORTER). American author of short stories famous for their suprise endings. Interesting and rare Autograph Letter Signed, 3 pages 8vo, 55 Irving Place, New York, July 9, no year but written in 1906, as the original envelope addressed by him is present and is postmarked July 9, 1906. The letter is to Marian Longfellow of Boston. "I found your pleasant little note on my return from a little journey. Thank you for your good words. Jimminy! but it sounds strange to hear a Bostonian call N.Y. 'the Great Metropolis.' They must have given you nice baked beans every day at the Westminster to make a such a good New Yorker of you. I hope you will come back soon after some more, and grant me the opportuntiy of saying some nice things about people from the 'Hub' when I have the pleasure of seeing you. Yours very truly, Sydney Porter." Choice condition. Porter had been in Texas for many years and had been in jail there for embezzlement. His journeys and experiences there were the foundation for many of his stories, although most concerned New York where he lived from 1902 until his death in 1910. Letters of O. Henry are rarely encountered, and this is an excellent example. 1200.00



FRANKED ENVELOPE OF MARY LINCOLN

22. LINCOLN, MARY. First Lady. Franked envelope addressed by her to "Mrs. Mary Brayman/Willards" and franked by her "Mrs. Lincoln" at the lower left. No postal markings. The envelope is 2 1/2 by 4 1/4 inches in size and is black bordered. Fine condition but for an expertly closed tear at the left side which touches the signature. The writing is dark and bold. Mrs. Brayman was the wife of Mason Brayman, a Springfield lawyer with whom Abraham Lincoln was associated in his work for the Illinios Central Railroad. Mason Brayman later became a Union General. 2250.00